



# International Standards and Innovation – What are the Linkages?

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Friday, April 14, 2006  
10:30 a.m., Bldg 101, Lecture Room B



Both innovation and enhanced competitiveness in the international arena are critical to U.S. economic growth. Standards facilitate innovation by providing an important source of information about state of the art technology. They can ensure compatibility between different elements in a network of technological ideas by defining interfaces between technologies. Because standards are the outcome of cooperative processes in their development, they contribute to innovation by helping to create common technological understanding among a broad base of actors. Yet, competitiveness is negatively affected by lack of recognition and harmonization of standards across markets. If U.S. exporters are to compete successfully on a global scale, it is essential to ensure that technically sound standards are in place in key emerging technology areas and that these standards are accepted globally. Achieving these goals has proven to be a difficult undertaking. This talk will address the following topics: what exactly is an international standard? What are specific examples of international standards contributing to innovation? What is NIST's role in the private voluntary standards arena?

Mary Saunders is the Chief of the Standards Services Division in NIST's Technology Services. SSD administers a range of standards-related programs that provide solutions to regulatory and industry needs and increase trade opportunities. Division programs include coordination with other federal agencies and the private sector to facilitate the U.S. standards and conformity assessment systems that meet regulatory and industry needs more effectively; providing standards-related assistance and information, both within NIST and to external customers; policy support for standards and conformity assessment activities for federal agencies; and a comprehensive program to accredit calibration and testing laboratories, in support of the U.S. measurement infrastructure, government agency and private sector needs.